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Senate

The Senate met at 3:02 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our sure refuge, teach us how to live this day. Give us relaxed attitudes that lengthen life. Make us like trees that bear lifegiving fruit. Keep us calm when we feel indignation. Grant that our work will bring freedom and not captivity.

Look with favor upon the Members of the Senate, and bless them according to their needs. Lord, move their minds to discover Your purposes. Keep alive in each of them the grace of Your spirit, lest they lose the awareness of Your presence in their lives.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 21, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Sen-

ator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 870, H.R. 502, AND H.R. 815

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, a little housekeeping.

I understand that there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 870) to amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 to authorize appropriations for the United States Fire Administration and firefighter assistance grant programs.

A bill (H.R. 502) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 815) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today is World Down Syndrome Awareness Day.

To honor this day, I am wearing a pair of socks given to me yesterday, in Schenectady, by my friend Sheila Seery. Sheila's daughter, Anna, is 14 and lives with Down syndrome. These socks come from a company on Long Island called John's Crazy Socks, run by a man with Down syndrome, who makes socks to help raise awareness for the condition. So, not only are they a wonderful pair of socks, they are also for a great cause.

Today, I am thinking of my friend Sheila and her daughter, Anna, as well as every family in our country who has a loved one living with Down syndrome.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the AUMFs, today, the Senate begins debate on a resolution formally repealing the Iraq AUMFs of 2002 and 1991, bringing us another step closer to ending these war authorities and putting these conflicts behind us for good.

I want to note last week's vote on cloture—68 to 27. That is a clear sign of bipartisan support in this Chamber. I hope Republicans will work with us to keep this bill moving forward, because AUMF repeal in the Senate is now a matter of when, not of if. It is my hope that we can finish our work on repealing these AUMFs as soon as possible.

We will have a reasonable amendment process. That said, given last week's strong vote, there is no reason to drag this out. I am encouraged that, in the House, Members from both sides of the aisle seem to be open to taking action once the Senate passes this resolution, and there are Members of the Senate Republican leadership who seem very strongly for the bill. That is a very good sign.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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As always, I thank my colleagues here in the Senate, on both sides of the aisle, for supporting this legislation, particularly Senators KAINE and YOUNG, who did an amazing job in rounding up support. This has been a dream of Senator KAINE's for a long time, and now it is coming closer to reality. And I want to thank Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member RISCH and all of the cosponsors of the legislation.

There is no justification anymore for allowing these Iraq authorizations to remain on the books. Every year they remain in place is another year a future administration can abuse them to ensnare us in another conflict in the Middle East. The American people don't want that. They are tired of endless wars in the Middle East. We owe it to our servicemembers and our veterans, as well as their families and communities impacted by the war, to repeal these AUMFs as soon as we can.

LOWER ENERGY COSTS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on H.R. 1, over the weekend, the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change released their most dire warning to date: Unless the world swiftly transitions to clean energy and curbs emissions, our planet risks crossing a point of no return sometime in the next decade. What awaits us on the other side could be severe and irreversible: droughts, storms, and crop failures at a level we can scarcely imagine today.

I think of my young grandchildren, and I worry about the world they are going to grow up in. This is something that should make every one of us want to do something real about climate change. Unfortunately, House Republicans seem to think the best solution for our energy needs is not to help America transition to clean energy. They think doubling down on more giveaways to Big Oil is the way to go.

I have been very clear about two things: Democrats want to see a bipartisan, commonsense energy proposal come together in Congress, but Republicans' H.R. 1 proposal is dead on arrival in the Senate.

Let me just repeat that so they hear it from the other side of the aisle. H.R. 1 is dead on arrival in the Senate.

So you can do all of the hoopla you want in the House. It ain't passing. It is not going to change a thing.

No serious proposal would omit, as the House bill does, long overdue reforms for accelerating the construction of transmission to bring clean energy to projects online. You can't have a good bill without some transmission. Transmission is vital to getting clean energy from where it is produced to where people live, but the Republican H.R. 1 proposal leaves this problem untouched. It is one of the major things we must do this year.

No real energy proposal would stuff itself with poison pills in the way Republicans' H.R. 1 does as well. House

Republicans want to repeal everything from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to the methane fee—imagine repealing the methane fee when methane is 10 times as dangerous as CO₂—and the royalty reforms for oil and gas leases. Democrats just passed these into law—to wide acclaim throughout the country and throughout the world—through the Inflation Reduction Act. So to undo them a few months later is ludicrous. It is laughable. It is not happening.

Until Republicans recognize that permitting reform is an essential step toward laying the foundation for clean energy and that transmission is essential, no proposal or package they put forward will be taken seriously.

Fortunately, there are some on both sides of the aisle in both Houses who are attempting to put together bipartisan legislation, and it has my blessing for them to try and come up with something that would be reasonable, productive, and could pass.

CHIPS AND SCIENCE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on CHIPS, today, the administration released a number of proposed guardrails that will ensure the Chinese Communist Party does not benefit from our efforts to increase chip production here at home.

We first put these guardrails into the CHIPS and Science bill, which we enacted into law last summer—something we are very proud of and that I am very proud of. We put them in because we didn't want to see companies getting help to expand operations in America and then using other dollars to expand operations in countries like China. I am glad the administration is implementing this law with good, strong guidelines—with good, strong regulations.

Specifically, the Department of Commerce and the Treasury have proposed new restrictions, which the Senate approved through the CHIPS and Science Act, on the amount companies receiving CHIPS money can invest in projects located within countries of concern. That includes Russia and China. Abusing CHIPS funding to expand projects in China-based markets would be self-defeating, and it would endanger our national security. This is what we passed into law in the CHIPS bill, and this proposed rule will implement it in a strong way. If we are serious about investing in domestic chip production, the last thing we should be doing is allowing companies to take CHIPS dollars and use them to build facilities in China that benefit the CCP.

I applaud the administration. I applaud our great Secretary of Commerce for this proposed rule, which I called on them to fast-track weeks ago, and I am glad they are doing it.

I am also glad this week that the administration is rolling out proposed guidance for implementing the CHIPS

investment tax credit—the ITC. I fought relentlessly to get this tax credit into CHIPS and Science. We knew, without it, our new factories here in America that are going to make advanced computer chips would not grow as quickly and as well.

I want to thank Senators WYDEN, BROWN, CASEY, TESTER, KELLY, WARNER, CANTWELL, and many others for joining me in this effort.

As I have said many times, President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party are on an all-out campaign to replace the United States as the global force in the 21st century. Look no further than the headlines today. President Xi is being wine and dined by Vladimir Putin, leaving no doubt that the CCP is rooting for Putin to prevail in Ukraine.

But it is not just on military matters that China wants to dominate. For decades, the CCP has rapaciously stolen American, European, and Japanese technologies and intellectual property. The CHIPS and Science Act was designed to halt this bleeding and bring semiconductor jobs back to our shores. But, if that is going to happen, we can't allow taxpayer dollars to expand projects in China to begin with. So I applaud the administration for introducing this proposed rule today.

RAIL SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the Norfolk Southern hearing, the many consequences of Norfolk Southern's derailment in East Palestine continue to reverberate today. That accident and the many that have occurred since have forced Congress to confront an ugly realization: Years of lobbying from rail companies and deregulation under Republican administrations have empowered the rail industry to put profits over people and endanger communities' safety.

Tomorrow, the CEO of Norfolk Southern will return to the Senate and testify before the Commerce Committee. He will be joined by Jennifer Homendy from the National Transportation Safety Board, as well as by two colleagues, Senators BROWN and VANCE, who have pushed the bipartisan Railway Safety Act.

We have heard Norfolk Southern's CEO say he is sorry for what happened in East Palestine, but we have also heard him say he is open to legislative efforts to enhance safety. I hope Norfolk Southern's CEO follows up his apology with candid answers to some important questions:

One, why did Norfolk Southern, after seeing a record \$3.3 billion in profits last year, pursue billions—billions—in stock buybacks instead of putting that money toward safety and toward their workers?

Two, why did the freight rail industry spend so much time and money lobbying for deregulation while also cutting the industry's workforce by, roughly, 20 percent?

And, three, will the chair of the NTSB, who will testify tomorrow, as